



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA ADMINISTRATOR AIDA ALVAREZ WORKS TO INCREASE U.S./EGYPT SMALL BUSINESS TRADE LINKAGES

WASHINGTON – Administrator Aida Alvarez will lead a team from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to Cairo next week to launch an SBA/Egyptian partnership aimed at increasing trade linkages between small businesses.

The SBA/Egypt Initiative will focus on mutually beneficial small business development. This effort is a direct outgrowth of the U.S.-Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth and Development, known as the Gore-Mubarak Partnership, between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore in 1998.

“The Small Business Administration is privileged to take a lead role in this partnership,” said Administrator Alvarez. **“We will examine the best-of-the-best from both our small business economies and exchange proven practices that have worked well for small business.”**

“By working together we will create more opportunities for small business owners in both the U.S. and Egypt,” the Administrator continued. **“This is a step toward increasing trade between our nations and building stronger, more diverse economies.”**

While in Egypt, Administrator Alvarez will meet with women business owners, open an SBA/Egypt Project Office, kick off an entrepreneurial workshop and co-chair the inaugural meeting of the initiative’s binational steering committee.

SBA will focus on three activities: partnering with Egyptian small business experts and program managers for training in SBA-like programs and services; creating an “Aid to Trade” program to increase U.S.-Egyptian small business trade opportunities; and providing assistance in planning for an Egyptian National Conference on Small Business, patterned after President Clinton’s 1995 White House Conference on Small Business.

The mission is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is at the invitation of the Government of Egypt’s Social Fund for Development. The trip will include small and microenterprise entrepreneurship training, and orientation on the establishment of an organization similar to SBA’s Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

SBA trainers will also provide information on U.S. loan guarantee programs, government procurement, Small Business Development Centers, Women’s Business Centers and Technology Incubators.